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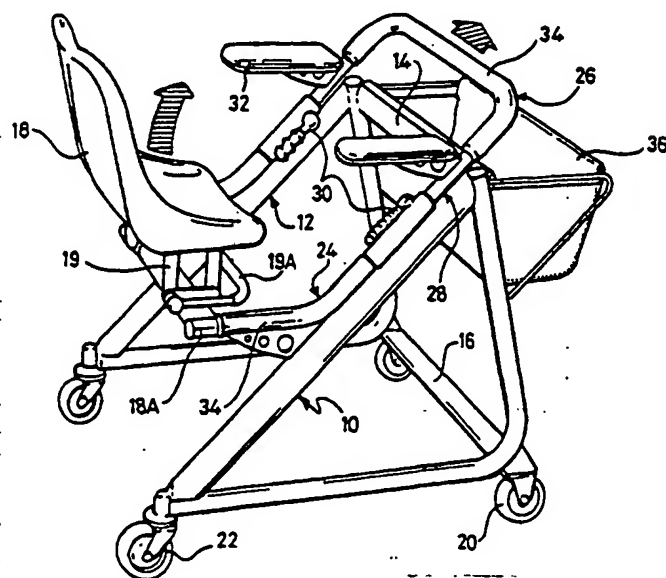
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/00287</p> <p>(22) International Filing Date: 29 January 1998 (29.01.98)</p> <p>(30) Priority Data: 9702250.3 4 February 1997 (04.02.97) GB</p> <p>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): HALL, George, Roberts [GB/GB]; Whitepost Farm, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield, Eye, Suffolk IP21 5TB (GB).</p> <p>(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: FLOUNDERS, Michael [GB/GB]; Elm Villa, Laxfield Road, Fressingfield, Eye, Suffolk IP21 5PW (GB).</p> <p>(74) Agent: STONE, Patrick; 28 Edenside Drive, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2EL (GB).</p>	<p>(81) Designated States: AU, CA, US, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).</p> <p>Published <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i></p>	

(54) Title: WALKING FRAME



(57) Abstract

A walking frame having side frame parts (10, 12) interconnected by crosspieces (14, 16), front wheels (20) and swivelling rear wheels (22), a rear seat (18), a lever controlled brake acting on the front wheels and a spring loaded pressure brake linked to the seat acting on the rear wheels, wherein the seat (18) is swingable out of the way to allow rear access into the frame between its side frame parts.

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Walking Frame

This invention relates to a walking frame, especially for disabled persons.

According to the invention, there is provided a walking frame comprising side frame parts bridged by at least one crosspiece, front and rear wheels, a rear seat, and braking means for preventing the frame from running rearwardly when a user grips the frame to assist movement from a seated position to a standing position.

The braking means may act on the front wheels or the rear wheels, and preferably both.

A front wheel braking means preferably acts on at least one front wheel. The frame preferably has two front wheels, and this braking means conveniently comprises means for preventing rotation of at least one of the front wheels at least in the sense corresponding to rearward movement of the frame. Such means may be ratchet or a one-way bearing for each front wheel, but preferably is a lever controlled brake for at least one front wheel, the lever being releasable after the user has stood up to enable forward movement of the frame.

Preferably rear wheel braking means, additional to the front wheel braking means, are provided for preventing running of the frame when the user is seated. Such braking means preferably acts on at least one rear wheel. The braking means may conveniently be a spring loaded pressure brake linked to the seat. This braking means may be such that it is not released until the user has substantially completely lifted his or her body from the seat.

The wheels are preferably in the form of castors, preferably fixed front castors and swivelling rear castors.

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The frame is preferably open at the back, and the seat is swingable, to a non-operative position, whereby a wheel-chair can be entered forwardly into the frame between its side parts. The seat, or a sub-frame carrying the seat, may be swingable upwardly and over or laterally swingable, about a generally vertical axis, in order to provide rear access into the frame as aforesaid.

It is alternatively although less desirably possible to provide for access rearwardly into the frame through the front of the latter, by providing a swingable crosspiece at or adjacent the front of the frame.

The seat may be adjustable in height, for example by means of a parallel linkage, a screwthreaded pillar or a gas strut.

The side parts of the frame preferably include supports for serving as forearm rests. At the front of the forearm supports hand grips may be provided to assist the user in lifting himself or herself into a standing position. Alternatively or additionally, a grab rail in the form of a front crosspiece at the top of the side parts of the frame may be provided for this purpose. The forearm rests and the grab rail or hand grips may also be adjustable in height, for example by means of one or more sliding or telescopic connections with the frame, and a locking device or clamp.

Means may be provided for attachment of a carrier basket at the front. Alternatively, a permanent shopping basket may be incorporated at the front, for example to adapt the frame into a shopping trolley for use by disabled persons at supermarkets and stores. In the case of access into the frame from the front, the carrier basket may constitute the aforesaid swingable crosspiece.

The frame, especially when not intended for use as a shopping trolley, may be arranged to be foldable, for example with a scissors action, or may be arranged

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to be collapsible side part to side part, to facilitate transport and storage, in which case the seat and/or basket may be detachably mounted to the frame.

The walking frame is further described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 shows a preferred embodiment of the walking frame in perspective view;

Figures 2 to 4 show alternative embodiments, also in perspective view;

Figures 5a and 5b illustrate the rear wheel braking means; and

Figure 6 illustrates the front wheel braking means.

Referring to Figure 1, the illustrated walking frame for disabled persons comprises two side frame parts 10, 12 linked by crosspieces 14, 16 at the front. At the rear the frame is bridgable by a seat 18. When the seat 18 is folded up out of the way on a side hinge 18A, the back of the frame is open to enable a wheel-chair to be pushed forwardly into the frame. When the seat is folded down, it locks into position further to rigidify the frame.

The seat 18 is adjustable in height by means of a parallel linkage 19 and an associated release bar 19A.

The frame has front and rear castor-type wheels 20, 22. The front castors 20 are fixed against swivelling, but the rear castors 22 can swivel to enable steering of the frame around bends and corners. Braking means for the front and rear wheels are later described with reference to Figures 5 and 6.

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The foldable seat 18 is actually mounted at the rear of an inclined subframe 24 carrying a front cross-bar which constitutes a grab rail 26 enabling the user more readily to move between sitting and standing positions. The grab rail 26 constitutes part of a telescopically extendable U-shaped section 28 of the subframe 24, which enables the grab rail to be adjusted in an inclined plane for reach relative to the seat 18. The section 28 fixes in position by means of releasable clamps 30, and also carries arm rests 32.

Foam rubber padding 34 covers the grab rail 26 and the rear part of the subframe 24 forward of the seat 18.

The upper crosspiece 14 of the main frame detachably carries a canvas basket 36.

A rear wheel braking means is illustrated in the simplified drawing of the walking frame shown in Figure 5a. The lower rear end of the main frame carries, on both side parts 10, 12, a tubular part 38 housing a brake push rod 40 carrying a brake pad 42 for the swivelling rear wheel 22. The rod 40 is urged upwardly by a spring 44 (see Figure 5b). A brake adjusting screw 46 acting as a stop is provided at the top of the tubular part 38.

When a downward thrust is applied to the rear end of the main frame, as by the user sitting down on the seat 18, the brake push rod 40 is pressed down against the action of the spring 44 so that the brake pad 42 bears hard against the wheel 22. The spring 44 is selected and the adjusting screw 46 set so that the automatic brake is not released until the user has substantially completely lifted his or her body from the seat, i.e. the user is substantially fully standing with hands gripping the grab rail. Moreover, the walking frame should, in proper use thereof, still not be free to move due to the braking means employed at the front wheels, as shown in Figure 6.

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The braking means at the front wheels 20 comprises a brake lever 48 acting through a sub-assembly 50 on brake push rods 52 having brake pads 54 acting on the front wheels 20. A brake adjuster in the form of a nut and spring 56 is incorporated.

When the user is seated, he or she uses the lever 48 to lock the front brakes on, and only releases the lever after standing up and being ready to walk forward.

An alternative embodiment of walking frame is shown in Figure 2, wherein the same reference numerals as in Figure 1 are employed for similar parts. In this embodiment, the side frame parts 10A, 12A are differently shaped, and interconnect at the rear by a releasable, hinged crosspiece 16 which carries the seat 18 on a gas strut 62 enabling height adjustment via a strut operating lever 64. The crosspiece 60 and with it the seat 18 are swung sideways out of the way to enable a wheel chair to be entered into the walking frame from the rear. A seat frame release lever is referenced 66.

This embodiment also differs from that of Figure 1 in that the grab rail frame 68 including arm rests 68A is adjustable for height and reach on a parallel linkage 70 lockable by a friction clamp 72. The grab rail and arm rests are covered with foam rubber padding.

Wire basket 36A optionally replaces the canvas basket of the embodiment of Figure 1.

A braking system similar to that hitherto described with reference to Figures 5 and 6 is preferably employed.

Figure 3 shows another possible embodiment of the walking frame in which the seat 18A, adjustable in height on a coarse screw thread 74, is carried by a rear-

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end subframe 76 which is hinged to swing sideways to allow rear access to the frame. A release lever for the subframe 70 is referenced 78.

The side frame parts 10B, 12B of the walking frame are again differently shaped, and arm rest supports 80, including arm rests 80A, are telescopically mounted for height and reach at the top of front columns 82 of the side frame parts 10B, 12B. The grab rail of preceding embodiments is replaced by hand grabs 80B on the supports 80. The supports 80 are lockable in a chosen position of adjustment by cam action clamps 84.

A rigid bin 36B of plastics material optionally replaces the canvas basket of the embodiment of Figure 1.

Again, a similar braking system to that described with reference to Figures 5 and 6 is preferably employed.

The embodiment of walking frame shown in Figure 4 differs from the previously described embodiments in that it provides for entry from the front instead of the rear.

The side frame parts 10C, 12C are again differently shaped, and rigidly interconnected at the rear by crosspieces one of which carries the seat 18 on a gas strut 62 enabling height adjustment by means of a strut operating lever 64, as in the embodiment of Figure 2.

The arrangement of adjustable height arm rest supports 80, complete with arm rests 80A and hand grabs 80B, is the same as in the embodiment of Figure 3.

The front of the walking frame is therefore left open except for a crosspiece swingable downwardly out of the way and which, in the embodiment of Figure

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4, is constituted by a side hinged basket 90. Catch 92 locks the basket in its closed condition across the front of the walking frame.

The braking system may again be that described with reference to Figures 5 and 6.

Various features taken from the individual embodiments of Figures 1 to 4 may be utilised in still further embodiments of the walking frame.

Additional features which may optionally be incorporated are:-

- 1) the ability to fold up the base of the seat against the seat back rest, for example to provide more front-to-back space for the user when walking;
- 2) the ability to completely detach the grab rail support (or arm rest/hand grab supports) and the seat, coupled with the provision of hinged crosspieces for the side parts of the frame, enabling the frame to be collapsed side part to side part, thereby to facilitate transport and storage of the frame when not in use;
- 3) the provision of a fifth wheel at the centre of the front of the frame; and
- 4) the provision of a counterweight at the back of the frame, more especially to prevent the frame from tipping forwardly if the user, when standing, leans on the grab rail or hand grabs.

Claims

1. A walking frame comprising side frame parts bridged by at least one crosspiece, front and rear wheels, a rear seat, and braking means for preventing the frame from running rearwardly when a user grips the frame to assist movement from a seated position to a standing position.
2. A walking frame according to claim 1, having braking means acting on both the front wheels and the rear wheels.
3. A walking frame according to claim 1 or claim 2, having front wheel braking means comprising means for preventing rotation of at least one of the front wheels at least in the sense corresponding to rearward movement of the frame.
4. A walking frame according to claim 3, wherein the braking means comprises a lever controlled brake for at least one front wheel, the lever being releasable after the user has stood up to enable forward movement of the frame.
5. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 4, having rear wheel braking means for preventing running of the frame when the user is seated.
6. A walking frame according to claim 5, wherein the said braking means acts on at least one rear wheel and comprises a spring loaded pressure brake linked to the seat.
7. A walking frame according to claim 6, wherein the pressure brake is not released until the user has substantially completed lifted his or her body from the seat.

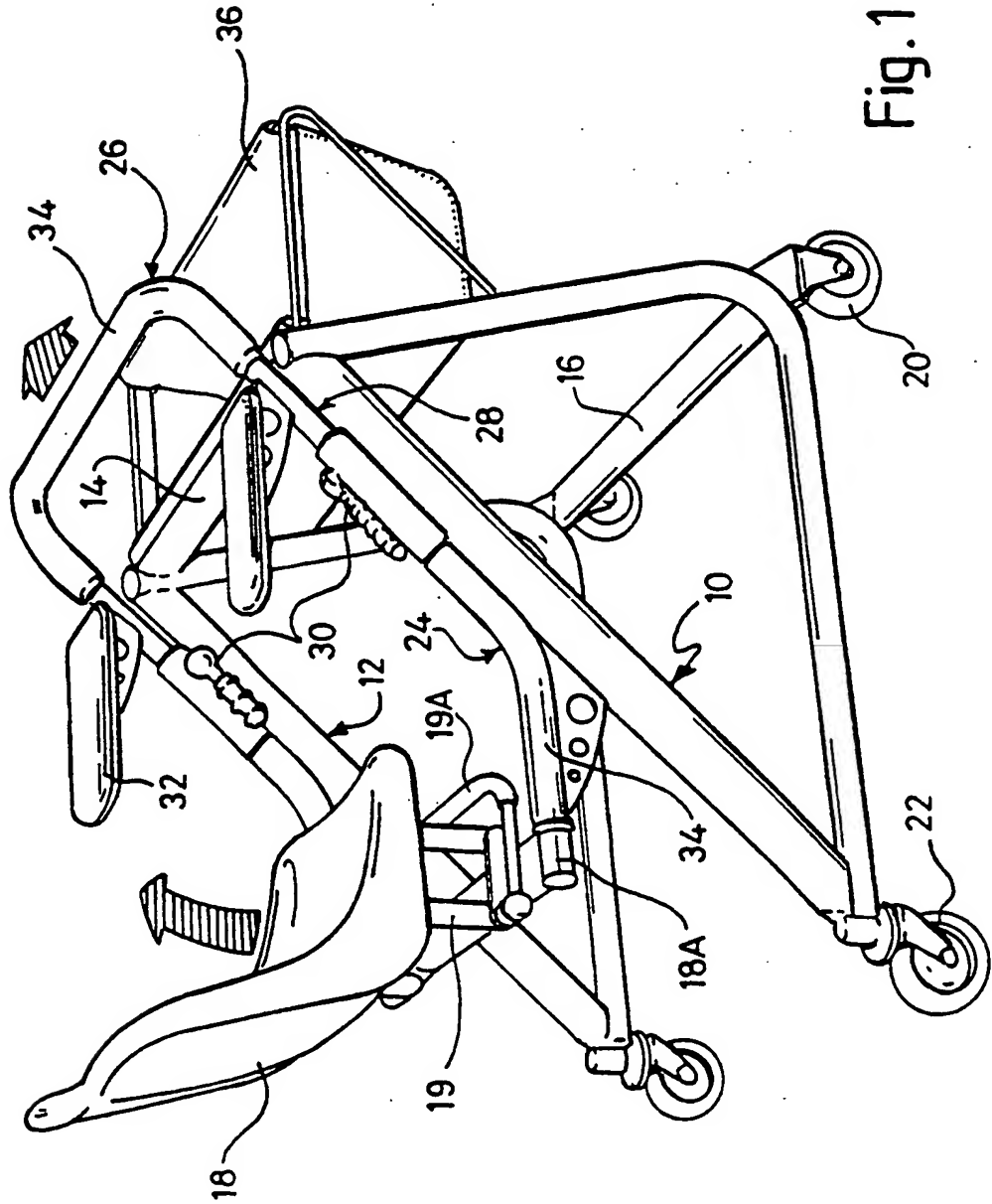
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8. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein the wheels comprise fixed front castors and swivelling rear castors.
9. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein the frame is open at the back, and the seat, or a sub-frame carrying the seat, is swingable to a non-operative position, whereby a wheel-chair can be entered forwardly into the frame between its side parts.
10. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein access rearwardly into the frame through the front thereof is enabled by a swingable crosspiece at or adjacent the front of the frame.
11. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 10, wherein the seat is adjustable in height.
12. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 11, wherein the side parts of the frame preferably include supports for serving as forearm rests.
13. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 12, having either hand grips at the front of the forearm supports or a grab rail in the form of a front crosspiece at the top of the side parts of the frame to assist the user in lifting himself or herself into a standing position.
14. A walking frame according to either of claims 12 and 13, wherein the forearm rests and/or the grab rail are adjustable in height.
15. A walking frame according to claim 14, wherein the adjustment means comprises one or more sliding or telescopic connections with the frame, and a locking device or clamp.

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16. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 12, having a carrier basket at the front or means for attachment of a carrier basket at the front.

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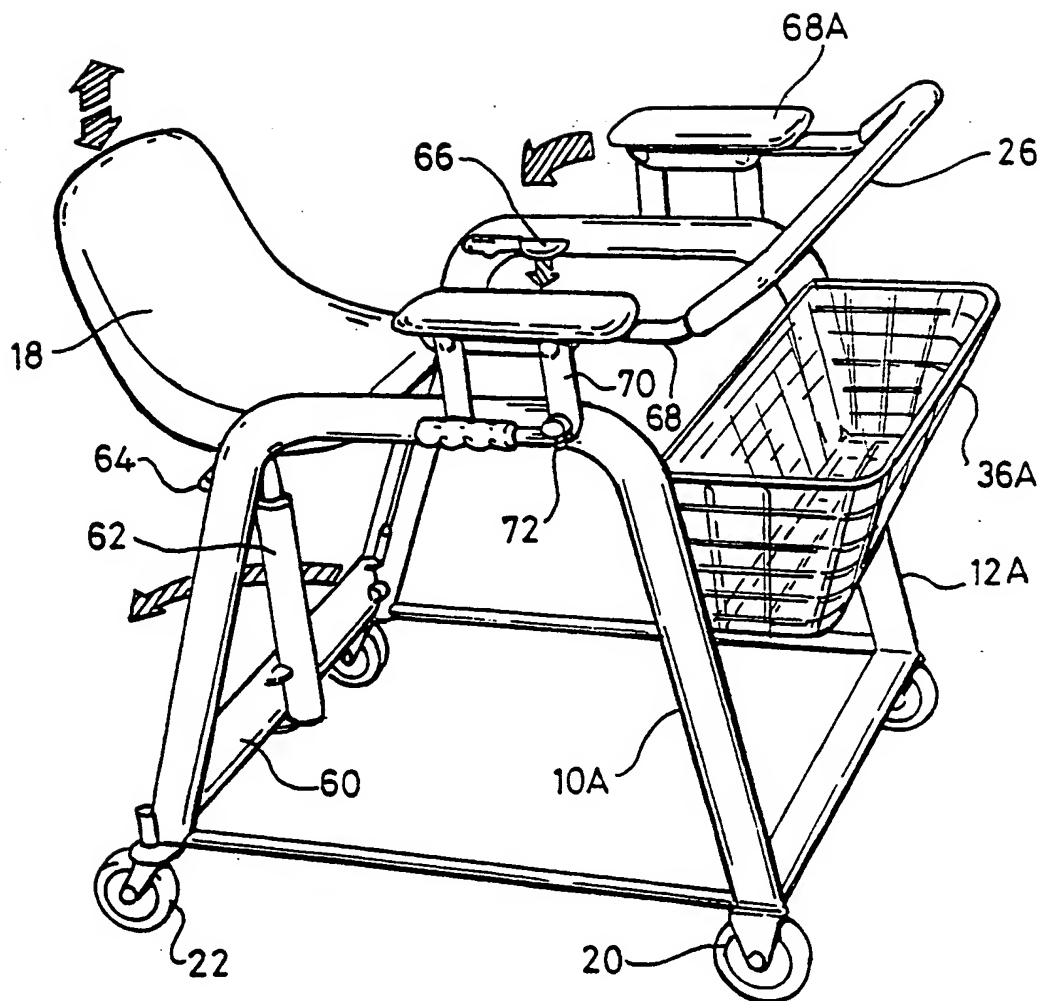


Fig. 2

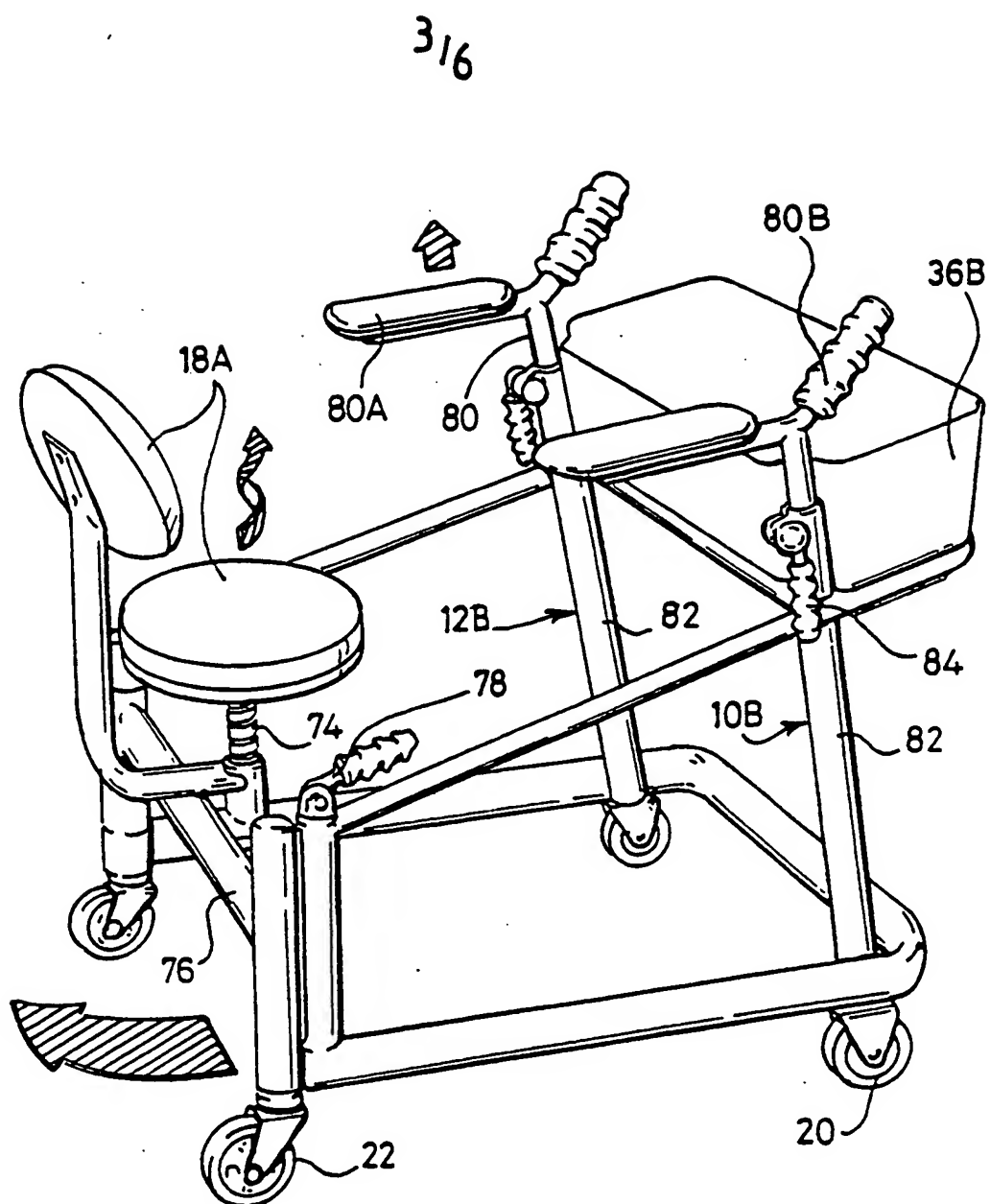


Fig. 3

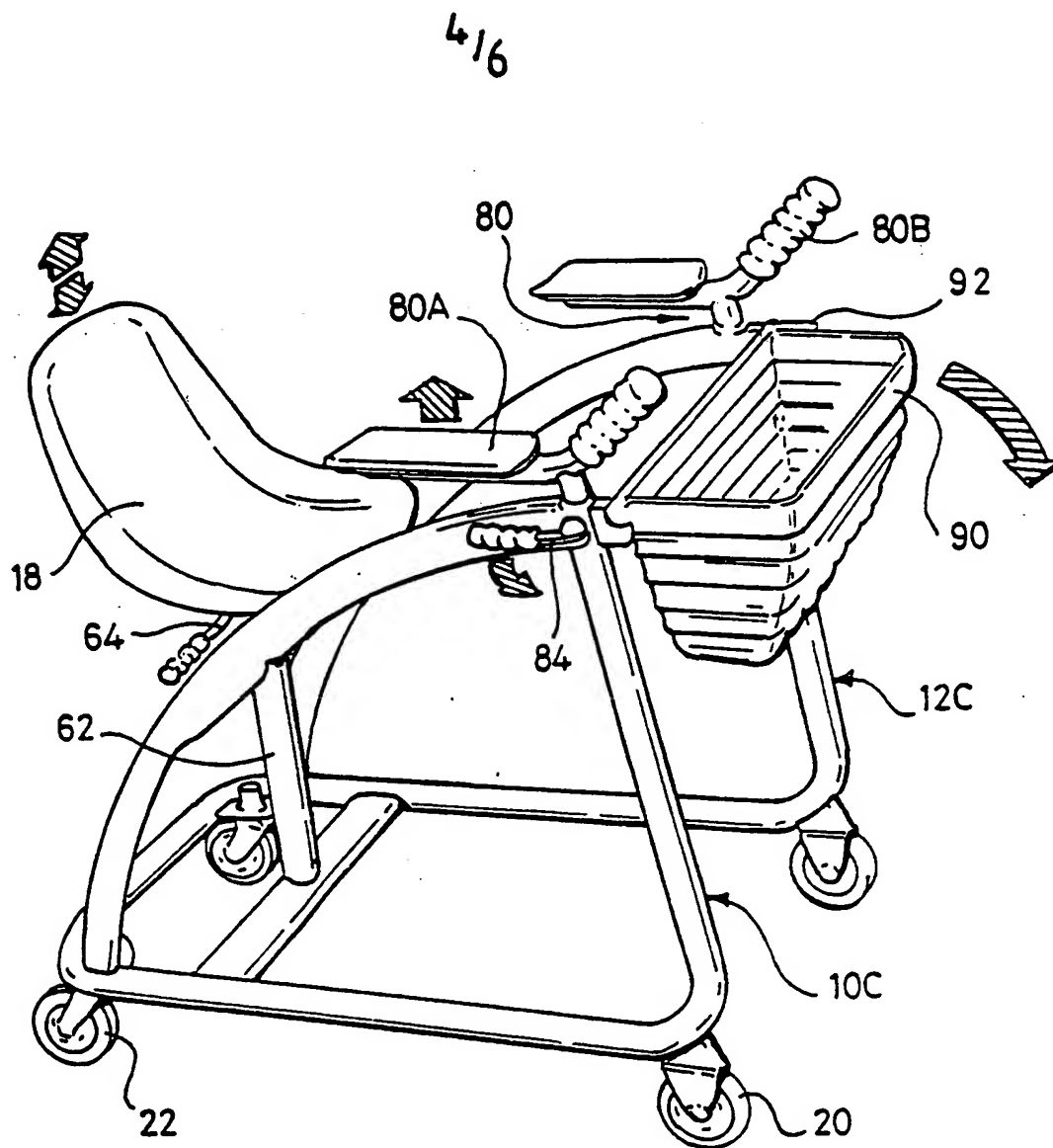
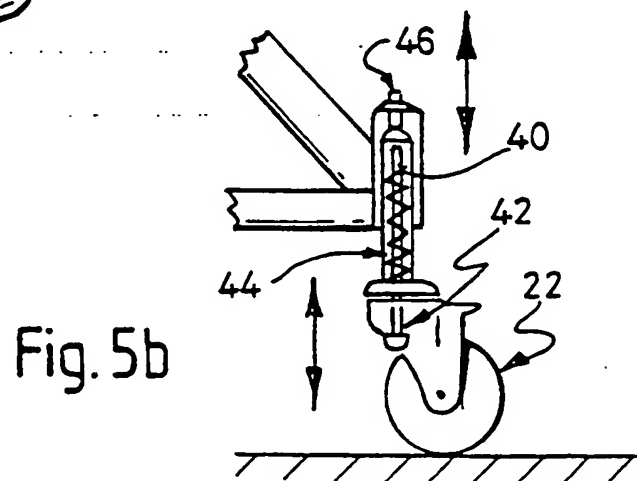
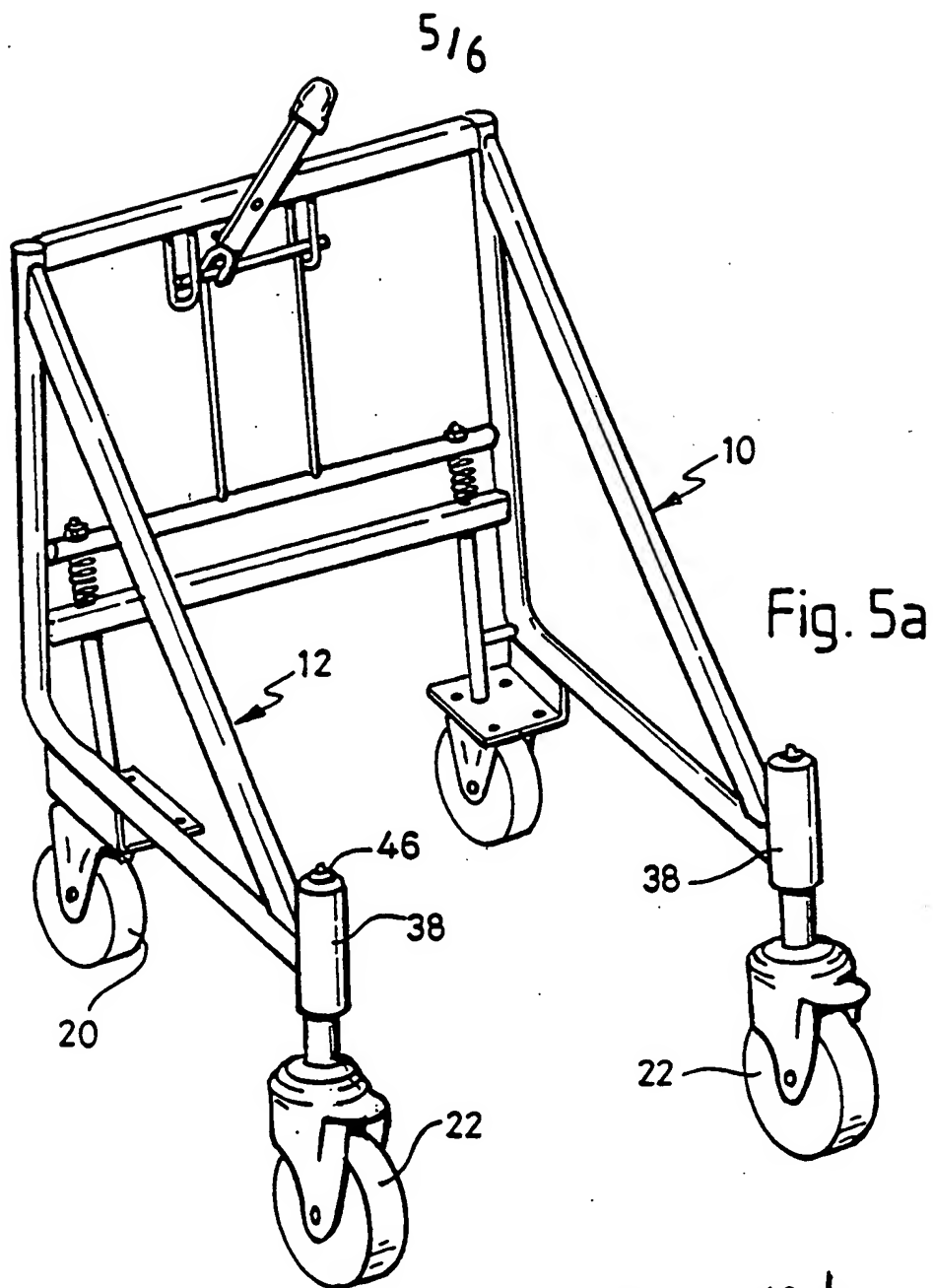


Fig. 4



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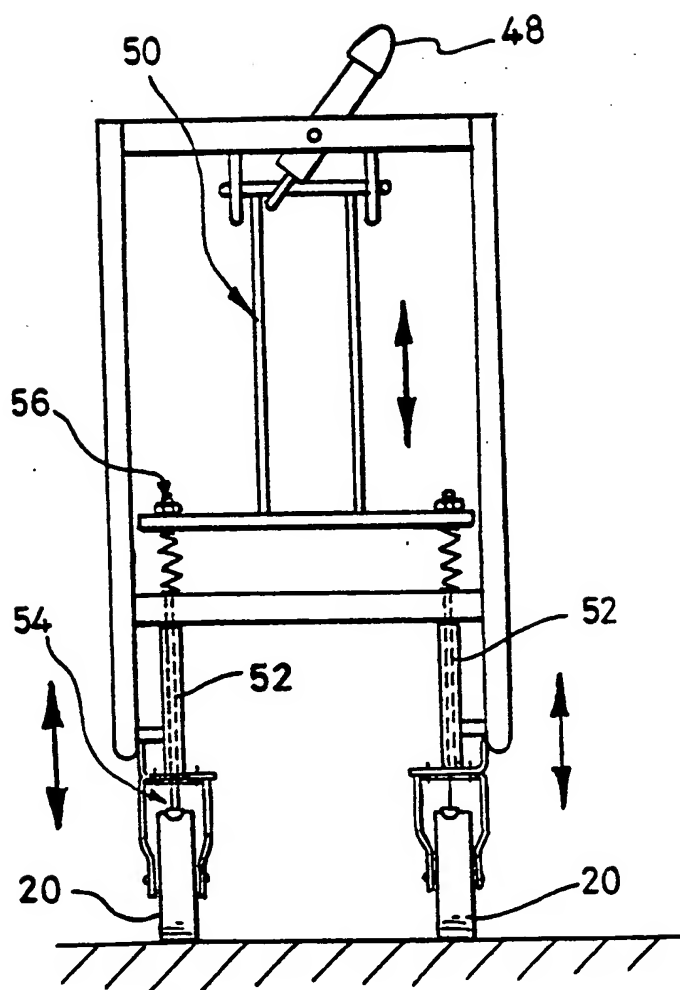


Fig. 6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/GB 98/00287

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A61H3/04

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 A61H

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2 437 778 A (AMES) 16 March 1948 see column 4, line 30 - column 5, line 26 see column 8, line 14 - line 20; claim 1; figures 1-8	1-4
Y	US 5 271 422 A (SORRELL ET AL.) 21 December 1993 see column 3, line 29 - line 60; figures 1-4C	1,2,5-7, 10,11, 13-15
Y	US 3 180 678 A (MCCABE) 27 April 1965 see column 1, line 62 - column 2, line 20; figures	1,2,5-7, 10,11, 13-15

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4 277 100 A (BEOUGHER) 7 July 1981 see column 2, line 15 - column 3, line 9; figures	1,3,4,8, 11
X	EP 0 009 260 A (LEDESKY) 2 April 1980 see abstract; figures	1,3,9, 12,13
X	US 4 342 465 A (STILLINGS) 3 August 1982 see column 4, line 61 - line 65; figure 3	1,10
A	EP 0 007 708 A (BARKER) 6 February 1980 see page 6, line 34 - line 36; figures 1,8 see page 10, line 13 - line 20	1,12,13, 16
A	US 2 792 052 A (JOHANNESSEN) 14 May 1957 see column 2, line 47 - column 3, line 18; figures 1-6	1,3,9, 11,13

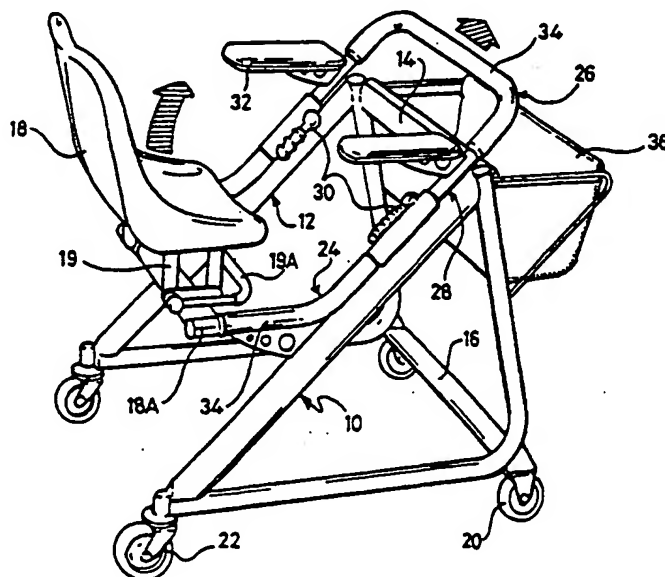
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(54) Title: WALKING FRAME



(57) Abstract

A walking frame having side frame parts (10, 12) interconnected by crosspieces (14, 16), front wheels (20) and swivelling rear wheels (22), a rear seat (18), a lever controlled brake acting on the front wheels and a spring loaded pressure brake linked to the seat acting on the rear wheels, wherein the seat (18) is swingable out of the way to allow rear access into the frame between its side frame parts.

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AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 27 July 1998 (27.07.98);
original claims 1 and 9-15 amended; remaining claims unchanged (2 pages)]

1. A walking frame comprising side frame parts bridged by at least one crosspiece, front and rear wheels, a rear seat, and braking means for preventing the frame from running rearwardly when a user grips the frame to assist movement from a seated position to a standing position, characterised in that the rear seat is movable to the side to allow wheelchair access into the frame from the rear.
2. A walking frame according to claim 1, having braking means acting on both the front wheels and the rear wheels.
3. A walking frame according to claim 1 or claim 2, having front wheel braking means comprising means for preventing rotation of at least one of the front wheels at least in the sense corresponding to rearward movement of the frame.
4. A walking frame according to claim 3, wherein the braking means comprises a lever controlled brake for at least one front wheel, the lever being releasable after the user has stood up to enable forward movement of the frame.
5. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 4, having rear wheel braking means for preventing running of the frame when the user is seated.
6. A walking frame according to claim 5, wherein the said braking means acts on at least one rear wheel and comprises a spring loaded pressure brake linked to the seat.
7. A walking frame according to claim 6, wherein the pressure brake is not released until the user has substantially completed lifted his or her body from the

seat.

8. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein the wheels comprise fixed front castors and swivelling rear castors.

9. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein the seat is carried on a sub-frame which is swingable to a non-operative position to allow access from the rear into the frame.

10. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 9, wherein the seat is adjustable in height.

11. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 10, wherein the side parts of the frame preferably include supports for serving as forearm rests.

12. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 11, having either hand grips at the front of the forearm supports or a grab rail in the form of a front crosspiece at the top of the side parts of the frame to assist the user in lifting himself or herself into a standing position.

13. A walking frame according to either of claims 11 and 12, wherein the forearm rests and/or the grab rail are adjustable in height.

14. A walking frame according to claim 13, wherein the adjustment means comprises one or more sliding or telescopic connections with the frame, and a locking device or clamp.

15. A walking frame according to any of claims 1 to 11, having a carrier basket at the front or means for attachment of a carrier basket at the front.